Office of Assessment

College/University: Hunter College
Department: Political Science
Course: Graduating Senior Essays

Criterion	5	4	3	2	1
Analysis and Argument: Clearly frames problem to be addressed in paper; states claims to be demonstrated; explicitly presents causal or other logic of argument; addresses competing viewpoints and explanations; employs evidence appropriately to support claims; recognizes limits or flaws in evidence; makes consistent assumptions and arguments; conclusion follows from argument presented	Explicitly identifies problem to be addressed & its importance, main claims, logic; carefully addresses competing explanations; uses evidence with care and notes limitations as appropriate; consistent argument; conclusion grounded in argument but explores broader conceptual points.	States problem and central claims to be demonstrated; notes alternative viewpoints and attempts to assess them; uses evidence appropriately to support claims; consistent argument; conclusion follows from argument but may extend beyond what has been demonstrated.	Opening incorporates main claims but does not clearly identify them; mentions competing explanations but does not evaluate them; sometimes tries to support argument with unsuitable evidence; argument may be inconsistent at points; conclusion restates thesis, argument, but no more than that.	Opening forces reader to guess about main claims/thesis; does not mention other explanations; evidence often fails to support point; inconsistent arguments undermine overall coherence; no conclusion or one not tied to argument.	No claims or thesis at outset; no sense there may be other explanations; little or no evidence used to support statements; inconsistent and self-contradictory; no conclusion or one from nowhere.
Organization: Presents a focused response to the assignment or research problem; follows a clear structure; uses clear and correct	Stays on-point throughout; Transparent, reader-friendly structure; effective transitions between sections and paragraphs; tightly focused	Focused approach overall; clear opening, body, and conclusion; transitions generally make structure clear; sound paragraph construction;	Structure exists but may need close reading to discern; inconsistent use of transitions; uneven paragraph structure; responds to most parts of	Standard structure is unclear, present only at times; few transitions, so reader often has to guess at connections; many poor paragraphs;	Basic structure is non-existent; no transitions; no paragraph breaks or paragraphs are random sentences; doesn't complete paper task; uses much

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transitions to link all parts of the argument; groups material into coherent paragraphs with topic sentences; responds to all parts of assignment or to research task paper sets for itself; avoids digressions and irrelevancies	paragraphs; complete response to question/research problem; no unnecessary material in body of paper, with any side points removed to notes.	complete response; few digressions and little or no irrelevant material	assignment or question; usually on point, though some irrelevant information may distract from focus.	fails to answer some parts of assignment; shows poor sense of whether material is relevant.	unnecessary or irrelevant material.
Sources and Research: Incorporates references to readings as appropriate to support argument; recognizes when points require references to sources; (for research papers) makes use of appropriate, legitimate sources; interprets sources correctly; cites sources consistently and correctly; integrates sources properly into writing; distinguishes between paper writer's voice and sources'	Consistently supports points with references to readings and interprets them correctly; (for research papers) careful use of a range of suitable sources; thorough, consistent citations (not just for direct quotations); quotations are integrated smoothly into sentence grammar; always distinguishes between author's voice and sources'.	Makes accurate references to readings through most of paper, though some other points should have cited sources; (for research papers) careful use of limited but appropriate sources; consistent citations for quotations and other material; most quotations fit sentence structure; regularly makes clear when expressing own view or that of sources.	Refers to course readings without formal citations, citing only when quoting material directly; often makes points without references to sources; (for research papers) sources are limited and sometimes of questionable value; occasional lapses in citation style; some quotations disrupt sentence syntax; occasionally forces reader to guess at voice.	Citations only for quotations; infrequent references to texts; inconsistent citation format (for research papers) demonstrates poor judgment in use of sources; quotations rarely observe grammatical conventions; often muddles author's voice and source.	Few or no references to readings; few or no citations; (for research papers) no identified sources; few or no quotations; no distinction between author's voice and others' ideas.

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voices.					
Effective Writing: Communicates clearly and concisely; uses appropriate political science terminology correctly; follows appropriate language conventions (syntax, spelling, punctuation, word choice, etc.).	Communicates precisely, uses varied vocabulary and sentence structure; employs political science terminology correctly; infrequent if any lapses in use of conventions.	Communicates effectively throughout the paper with few lapses in conventions; uses political science terminology correctly.	Communicates clearly; lapses in certain conventions rarely impede comprehension; inconsistent use of terminology.	Meaning is generally clear to informed reader, but poor writing sometimes impedes comprehension or proves distracting; frequent misuse of political science terminology.	Verges on unintelligible because sentences rarely adhere to writing conventions; little or no use of political science terminology; like reading mud.